

VZCZCXRO3102
OO RUEHAG RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK RUEHMOS
DE RUEHFR #3448 1421629
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 221629Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7684
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES PRIORITY
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 003448

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/17/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: GOF WELCOMES FORMATION OF IRAQI GOVERNMENT

REF: STATE 81632

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Bruce Turner, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) The following is an informal embassy translation of the French MFA statement issued May 22, welcoming formation of the new Iraqi government:

Begin text: France welcomes the formation of a government in Iraq, the result of the December 15 elections and which should aim to ensure a balanced representation of the different components of the country. France hopes that the new government works with all Iraqis to reduce violence, promote national reconciliation, and manages well the reconstruction of the country. In liaison with its European partners, France is ready to collaborate with Iraqi authorities in order to preserve Iraq's unity and stability and to assure the country's return to full sovereignty. End text.

¶2. (C) Prior to issuance of the MFA statement, poloff discussed reftel points on formation of the Iraqi government with MFA Iraq desk officer Bernard Chappedelaine May 22. Chappedelaine confirmed the GoF's intention to welcome, "in uniformly positive terms," formation of the new Iraqi government, emphasizing the importance of its greater inclusiveness and GoF readiness to work with it. Chappedelaine confirmed that the GoF was open to initiating high-level exchanges with the new government, but had taken no decisions yet, and would look first to upcoming coordination meetings within the EU to discuss European engagement with the new Iraqi government.

¶3. (C) Comment: Notwithstanding the gratuitous reference to Iraq's "return to full sovereignty," today's GoF statement is a welcome step. The MFA announcement on the new government was overshadowed somewhat by May 22 allegations in the UK press that France paid 25 million dollars in ransom to secure the release of three French journalists held hostage in Iraq in 2005 and 2004. (Italy and Germany were similarly accused.) The MFA, along with issuing today's statement welcoming the new Iraqi government, strongly denied that any such ransom was paid. End comment.

Please visit Paris' Classified Website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm>

HOFMANN